

knowledge of women's rights in Morocco. Mr. Dahan's speech was not only eloquent but tremendously important in educating the Members and their staff on this issue.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Mr. Dahan for sharing with so many prominent leaders his expertise. With that I would like to place Mr. Dahan's testimony in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

MOROCCO, PROGRESS TOWARD EQUALITY

(By Charles Dahan)

Thank you for inviting me to visit with you about Jews in Morocco today. Let me start with a brief overview of how the Jews came to settle in Morocco.

Two major groups of migration:

1. 3-400 BC Destruction of the Temple. Jews crossed Egypt and settled in the Berber region of what is now Libya and Morocco. These Jews are referred to in Hebrew as "Tochavim". At this time, the Berbers had no organized religion and the Jews lived their Jewish life coexisting with the tribes and, on occasion, conversions would occur. In the 1300s, Islam was introduced in Morocco and most Berbers converted to Islam.

2. 1490s Spanish Inquisition. Both Muslims and Jews were forced out of Spain and settled in Northern Africa. This was a shared historical experience. These Jews are called "Mekorachim" in Hebrew and they numbered between 25-30,000.

There were several important moments where the Jewish contribution to Moroccan life was recognized and, therefore, protected by the Sultans. Two examples are:

We see the creation of "Mellahs" during the 1600s. Jews were considered "dhimmis" (literally, protected persons) at this time by the Sultan. Original purpose of mellahs was to protect Jewish communities. Mellahs developed center of services for royal authority like duties, minting coins, diplomacy, and royal merchants.

In the 1800s, Sir Moses Montefiore met with Sultan Ridi Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman who issued royal decree proclaiming Jews in Morocco were protected by justice under Moroccan law.

A very important development in 1862 is the creation of first school of the Alliance Israelite in Tetouan. The result of this school significantly increased the education level of Jews as the network spread across Morocco. This focus on education of the existing 200-250,000 Moroccan Jews is a major force in their historical value as a community. For example, in 1991 King Hassan II said to Moroccan Jews in a speech "You preceded the Arabs in Morocco, and you still stand out by a quality which distinguishes you in the cultural and religious fields. The Moroccan Talmudic School was universally recognized as the best in the world."

Feast of the throne, 1943: "I consider the Jews as Moroccan citizens with the same full and equal rights, as their Moslem brothers. Their property and their persons are inviolable. I am completely opposed to the new anti-semitic laws, and refuse to be associated with measures which I disapprove. I wish to inform you that, as in the past, the Jews remain under my protection, and I will not tolerate any discrimination between my subjects."

Moroccan independence from France greatly altered the Moroccan Jewish life. Anxiety over the future mounted among Jews. In 1955, a year before Moroccan independence, North African Jews represented 87% of new immigrants in Israel.

Even though the newly independent King Mohammad V declared in 1956 "The Jews

will enjoy every right, in complete equality, and be associated in every form of our national life, including responsibilities within the government", life dramatically changed for the Jews in Morocco. Several social, political and economic factors were conditions for a perfect storm:

Decolonization led to an economic vacuum by the French. A whole level of life had been economically dependent on the French and the balance of this life shifted dramatically adding anxiety to the Jewish population.

Arabization was one of the main objectives of the Nationalists. Remember that French had been the language of education, much culture, daily life and commerce for this generation. The Jewish elite, living outside of the Mellah, did not speak Arabic and this lack of communication led to more confusion and anxiety.

Hardening of the National Political Party was new to the Jews. Encouragement from Nasser and the Arab League led to many demonstrations against the French colonists. In addition, the Party was leaning to the Left with communist ideas and forging relations with Moscow. It was too dangerous to attack French Christian citizens so the Moroccan Jews became the invented symbol of colonization. Any kind of demonstration or riot ended up targeting Moroccan Jews.

After the Independence, King Mohammad V restricted emigration. The Jews were torn between the consequences and uncertainty of their future in Morocco and the illegal departure for a totally unknown life. Some chose to escape and one historical consequence was 1961 ship called the Pisces that sank killing all 43 Jews who had been smuggled aboard. This was an important event that politicized the Moroccan Jews. In 1962, upon the ascension of King Hassan II, Jews were allowed to emigrate. King Hassan told the community: "... I have recognized your rights as full-fledged Moroccan citizens. I request that you will be the ambassadors of Morocco wherever you may choose to emigrate and that you defend the reputation of your country whenever it is maligned by the media through bad faith or ignorance".

That was the first major Jewish exodus from Morocco. Two-thirds of that population left Morocco for Israel and Canada. The second exodus was in 1967 during the Six-Day War and the third was in 1973 during the Yom Kippur War.

This brings us to life today as a Moroccan Jew, both inside and outside the country. King Mohammad VI is a young and modern monarch who faces worldwide pressure. His legacy to follow is that of a peacemaker, often behind the scenes. His vision is to bring Morocco to a western level of development.

Although the population of Jews within Morocco has dwindled to approximately 3,000, there remains a vibrant community involved in many levels of society.

Although many of the Moroccan Jews have left, we still retain our unique blending of Judaism and Moroccan culture. This infusion is apparent in:

Religion: only Moroccan Jews pay homage to sainted Rabbis buried on Moroccan soil. These pilgrimages, "hiloulahs," involve a return to Morocco and a visit to the buried site which is tended and respected as well by Moroccan Muslims.

Weddings in Israel and Moroccan Jews worldwide are preceded by Hennas—typical of the Berber/Muslim religion. Also carrying of brides on "litters".

In conclusion, there is more to bring Moroccans together than to separate them. The single biggest threat to unity is extremism.

The United States needs to support Morocco in the strongest way to encourage their development as through the recent Trade Agreement and to help them fight the threat of terrorism. Through investment and development, there are promises to be a bright future.

As for Moroccan Jews who have emigrated, I think the words of Yitzhak Shamir sum it up: "Moroccan Jews were the only Jews that never renounced their country, nor were they rejected by their country".

THE WAR

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 19, 2007

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, in the fall of 2002, I was among the majority of Democrats in the House of Representatives who voted against the Iraq war resolution. Claims about weapons of mass destruction had not been substantiated and there was no evidence that Saddam Hussein was linked to al Qaeda and the 9-11 attacks. I did not accept—as administration officials asserted—that the costs of the war and rebuilding of Iraq could be financed by Iraqi oil revenues. At that time, I told my colleagues that Iraq did not pose a direct threat to our national security and that we should concentrate our power on capturing Osama Bin Laden and destroying al Qaeda.

The invasion and occupation of Iraq has not achieved what its proponents promised. The war has degraded our military, undermined our nation's influence in the world, vitalized terrorists, and left the American people more vulnerable to attack than we were before the war.

Now, the National Intelligence Estimate confirms that while the administration vainly wrestles to salvage some semblance of victory in Iraq, Osama Bin Laden and his followers are poised for a resurgence. Al Qaeda's terrorist network, which was weakened but not destroyed after we invaded Afghanistan, never lost sight of its enemy. Today, al Qaeda poses as grave a threat to the United States as it did before 9-11.

As long as we remain in Iraq, al Qaeda will profit and the American people will pay the price. The security of our Nation demands that we withdraw from Iraq and use all of our military, intelligence and diplomatic resources to tear down the terrorist networks that want to destroy our way of life.

This Administration must stop blindly pandering to elitist dreams of rebuilding other nations in our image. Protecting the American people is a fundamental purpose of our government. The Iraq war is not advancing our national security; it is time to bring our troops home.

The Bush policy in Iraq has already cost the lives of over 3,600 brave Americans, with over 26,000 wounded. It has squandered and scattered resources that we should have devoted to our homeland security. And it has cost the U.S. citizens over half a trillion dollars in hard earned wages and lost Government services.

When history is written, it might say that we lost the first battle in the war against terrorism, but I pray it will not say that we lost the war.